

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The system has a A speech recognizer (2) for recognising recognizer recognizes speech from a user and a synthesizer (6) for replying synthesizer replies to him the user and engages in a dialogue with the object of enabling the user to convey to the system a piece of information such as a telephone number. The system builds up the number in a buffer (10). Each time it receives a string of digits, it reads it back for confirmation. When a number (or part of one) is read back, it is divided into "chunks" according to certain criteria: the positions of these divisions can be recorded to be taken into account in later processing. Responses are compared with the current buffer contents to determine whether ~~they~~ it such should be interpreted as a correction, partial correction or pure continuation of ~~the~~ existing contents. Positions in the buffer at which pure continuations are entered are marked, to allow a "final repair" process in which, if the final result fails to match some criterion of acceptability (e.g., length) the marked positions can be reexamined to determine whether interpretation instead ~~as~~ of correction or partial correction would meet the criterion. Algorithms ~~are described for~~ comparing compare new input with digits already received, to decide how it is to be interpreted.